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Proposed Statement on Cuba by President Kennedy on July 26

I would like to speak today to you, the people of Cuba. I speak to you as a friend on this special day that once, only a few years ago, was the symbol of the great hopes of Cuba; of the Cubans' will to put an end to terror and to begin far-reaching social and economic advances, within a climate of freedom and respect for human dignity.

This July 26, however, does not shine on a prosperous, on a free, or on a happy Cuba in which a sense of brotherhood prevails. It does not dawn on the republic "with all and for all" of which Martí once dreamed. Deep antipathies divide the Cuban family. The great revolutionary ideal of the July 26 movement, the ideal of "bread with freedom" has been betrayed. One tyranny has made way, not for the democracy that the Cuban people wanted, but for another tyranny. The small benefits that some may have derived from that regime have cost the Cuban people their freedom and a high price in blood, tears, and hopelessness.

But this situation will not last. The Cuban people have always loved liberty as deeply as they have honored their country, and they will not accept indefinitely their present condition

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condition of servitude. As Martí wrote: "The man who conforms by obeying unjust laws and permits anybody to trample the country in which he was born, and to mistreat his country, is not an honorable man." This is the truth we had in mind when at San José we joined the Presidents of Central America and Panama in saying we have "no doubt that a genuine Cuban revolution will live again, that its betrayers will fall into the shadows of history and that the martyred people of that oppressed isle of the Caribbean will be free from Communist domination, free to choose for themselves the kind of government they wish to have, and free to join their brothers of the hemisphere in a common undertaking to secure for each individual liberty, dignity, and well-being, which are the objectives of all free societies."

The future of Cuba is, of course, in the hands of the Cuban people. The great original ideals of the July 26 movement are not dead. But their vitality will depend above all on the vigor and the dedication of Cuba's youth, of her students and her intellectual leaders, of her militia, of her workers, of her vigorous guajiros (wah-HEE-rows). The people of Cuba know what they want, and it is up to them to decide the way of life which they wish for themselves and for their future generations.

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It is not for us to tell you, the Cuban people, what you should want. But I trust you will not misunderstand me if I describe today what I firmly believe to be the things that you, the Cuban people, do not want.

You do not want to stay in a strait jacket, unable to say or write what you think or to meet with old friends and neighbors for fear of being the objects of suspicion and distrust. This, the Cuban people do not want.

You do not want to have a foreign ideology imposed on you, nor to be a colony at the mercy of the whims of a foreign power and of its political and military interests. This, the Cuban people do not want.

You do not want to live isolated from your old friends and neighbors, your sister countries of the hemisphere, whose traditions and historic ideals you share. This, too, the Cuban people do not want.

You do not want to go back to a corrupt and tyrannical past, but neither do you want promises of material advantages to be bought at the cost of human freedom. This, the Cuban people do not want.

Above all, you do not want that love of country so fiercely felt by militiamen, student and guajiro (wah-HEE-row) alike, to be used and perverted as an excuse for subjecting Cuba to the will of another state and for maintaining by repressive

means an authoritarian political system that is alien to Cuba's authentic nationalist and democratic sentiments. This, decidedly, the Cuban people do not want.

The revolution of which July 26 is the symbol; the genuine revolution of which the July 26 movement dreamed, is a nationalist revolution, a revolution conceived by Cuban minds, planned by Cuban talent and ability, to be developed and carried out by Cuban hands.

This is the genuine revolution that would mobilize the energy and idealism of Cuba's youth; that would bring to the long suffering Cuban guajiros (wah-hee-rows) what they want for themselves, for their children, for their grandchildren.

When the revolutionary fervor of July 26 sweeps once again through Cuba, you can rely on our understanding and on our cooperation. And not only on ours, but I am confident on that of the entire hemisphere. We will extend a helping hand if you want it and if you need it as you pursue the aims of the genuine Cuban revolution.

The return of a free Cuba to the regional bodies for political and economic cooperation will bring rejoicing to the hemisphere.

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With the drive and imagination for which its people are noted, Cuba would not only be a partner in the Alliance for Progress, but also would provide impetus for the great joint effort to assure to all free men of the Americas bread freedom and dignity. It is precisely your present suffering under communist totalitarianism that will enable Cuba to show clearly why social reform must be nourished by political liberty and by profound respect for human rights.

A Cuba engaged in its own genuine revolution would help us all to insure to the men, women and children of the Americas equality of opportunity and those basic sources of security in today's world: techo, trabajo y tierra, salud y escuela (tay-cho, trah-bah-hoe, ee tee-err-ah, sah-lewd ee ess-kweh-lah). We, for our part, always aware that the Cuban people are the only masters of their own destinies, would gladly work hand in hand with them, if they so wish, in the urgent task of rebuilding their economy and of implanting democracy.

Only the Cuban people can, for example, restore to their university its prestige and the academic freedom that the revolution promised. Only the Cuban people can determine what can be taught in the schools and the cultural values that must be inculcated in their young. Only the Cuban worker can build an authentic trade-union movement that is truly

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free and not the creature of rigid totalitarian control and discipline. Only the Cuban guajiro (wah-hee-row) working his own land as a free man, earning fair wages, well rewarded for his efforts and protected by broad social services can increase the productivity of the land. Only free Cubans, young and old alike, can assure that in their country social advance will go hand in hand with personal freedom, and that Cubans will not be forced, as they are now, to spy on one another.

I am confident that all true friends of Cuba share my conviction that the day is not too far distant when these aspirations will be fulfilled. I know that in every walk of the island's life -- in the fields, the factories, the schools and universities; in the army, in the militia, in the government itself -- there are countless Cubans whose attachment to liberty is symbolized by the rising sun of freedom on their country's shield; whose valor is rooted in the noble tradition of the Mambises (Mam-bee-says), and who are determined to restore their homeland to the company of free nations. Of one thing you may be certain, my Cuban friends: when that day comes, you will enjoy the friendly support and the cooperation of all Americans.

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When the new day of genuine independence dawns; when the Cubans' deep love of homeland asserts itself once again, Cuba will find herself once again an honored member of the hemisphere family, and will become a beacon of progress and of freedom for us all; a neighbor to be regarded, not with suspicion, but with great respect and with affection.

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